



City Council Strategic Plan



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Acknowledgements

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Surprise sees a bright future and exciting challenges ahead for our dynamic and energetic community. In August 2010 the City Council initiated a process to bring people together and focus the community's priorities.

Over the next several months, the community considered thought-provoking questions – What are the most pressing issues and challenges our community will face in the next 5 to 10 years? Where should city government focus its priorities?

As the Council, Boards, Commissions and the community reflected on these questions through visioning sessions, surveys and other input opportunities, a focused vision for the City of Surprise Strategic Plan emerged. The plan sets out five strategic areas to guide City Council's budgetary and policy decisions:

- **Transportation**
- **Economic Development**
- **Sustainability**
- **Tourism**
- **Higher Education**

Implementation strategies will be developed through the city's budget process and departmental goals. Progress towards achieving these commitments will be measured and

monitored by key indicators identified in the plan.

The Strategic Plan is a dynamic roadmap to help realize our community's future and in concert with other planning and policy documents, will provide us with the tools to achieve our community's shared vision.



INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Plan establishes five different priorities to guide decision making, shape partnerships locally and regionally, and involve the residents of Surprise in building our future based on a shared vision. For each priority, a series of action steps are identified. These steps are the result of broad community input from the City Council, appointed Boards and Commissions, and the general public. The Strategic Plan provides focus to a shared vision of the community's future and city's expenditure of discretionary funds and provides a yardstick to measure the city's performance in these areas.

2011 STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUS AREAS

To achieve our vision we have identified the following five strategic focus areas:

- Transportation
- Higher Education
- Tourism
- Sustainability
- Economic Development

COUNCIL AND CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

The foundation for this plan update is the public involvement process. The planning effort included extensive outreach to our community to find out what their priorities are, in addition to broad involvement with the City Council, and other city Boards and Commissions. In total, about 336 of our citizens participated in the process.

Council Review

On August 17th, the Mayor and City Council were led through a series of exercises to develop the initial focus of the plan. The City Manager and various Department Directors facilitated the sessions by providing technical expertise and implementation suggestions. For each of the six focus areas, the Mayor and Council worked cooperatively to reach consensus on the vision statement and strategic focus areas. The draft Strategic Plan created as a result of this exercise was then presented to the Council on August 31st for prioritizing strategies and any other changes.

Boards and Commissions Review

Per the direction of the Mayor and City Council, affected city Boards and Commissions were asked to provide their input regarding the Strategic Plan in November. Their specific role was to review the draft action plan items and offer refinements, entertain public comment, and offer to council their suggested prioritization.

The dates of these review sessions were as follows:

- Transportation Commission November 8th

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Quality of Life Commission | November 9 th |
| • Tourism Board | November 9 th |
| • CRS Advisory Board | November 16 th |

Citizen Engagement Process

The Communications Department employed a number of communications platforms and approaches in order to engage the public in the Strategic Plan input process.

Public Meetings

Three public meetings in the community were held follows:

- January 5: Surprise City Council Chambers
January 6: Sun City Grand
January 12: Sierra Montana Recreation Center

These meetings featured a presentation on the Strategic Plan concept, an explanation of the five main Strategic Plan objectives, and a listing of priorities as identified by the Council and Commissions under each objective. The attendees then ranked the action plan items from 1-5.

Interactive Web Site

In early January, the Communications Department launched a fully interactive web site in which residents had a similar opportunity to learn about the Strategic Plan concept, objective and priorities; and individually participate in an online exercise ranking the priorities. In order to generate a sense of engagement from participation, the site also included a reporting page showing current rankings in each of the categories.

Promotion

The strategic planning process, the web sites and the meeting times/dates were prominently featured in:

- Surprise Progress magazine, which was delivered to each household in the city in the first week of January.
- The site will be prominently featured and promoted on the web site, www.surpriseaz.gov
- “Notify Me” e-mail list and its Twitter feed to remind recipients about the opportunity to attend meetings or participate via the web site.
- Surprise 11 to aggressively promote the input opportunities through the production and frequent airing of a public service announcement.
- News releases to local media suggesting advance notice and coverage of the meetings will also be utilized to help raise community awareness.

What did we learn?

Based on the feedback from the Boards and Commissions and the general public, each of the Strategic Plan goals are marked with either a 1 or 2. A “1” indicates that the goal was favored by the public and a “2” indicates that the goal was favored by the Boards and Commissions.

TRANSPORTATION

Vision Statement

The City of Surprise will have an efficient, cost effective, multi-modal transportation network that provides commuter choice, ease of movement into, within, and out of Surprise.

Why is this Important

Transportation is of high concern to Surprise residents. The city transportation system is a major factor in sustaining the quality of life and economic health of the region. Creating a balance in future investments in the travel system is important. In order to achieve the desired outcomes for Surprise, numerous types of improvement strategies are recommended, ranging from annual maintenance to longer term projects.

Goals/ Action Plan

- Access to/from Surprise – i.e. east/west connections^{1, 2}
 - ⇒ Identify a list of specific east-west corridors, coordinate a detailed cost-benefit analysis with MAG, develop funding strategies with neighbors.
 - ⇒ Bell & Grand Traffic Interchange.
 - ⇒ Second river crossing north of Bell.
 - ⇒ Peoria Avenue river crossing.
 - ⇒ Facilitate connections to major existing and future transportation corridors – Hassayampa, I-10, White Tanks Freeway.
 - ⇒ Support construction of regional freeways providing improved access to Surprise and the region.
- Commuter rail corridor with multiple stations and transit ori-

ented development.¹

- ⇒ Coordinate with MAG and west valley communities on commuter rail planning.
- ⇒ Pursue planning grants to fund transit oriented development along the Grand Avenue Commuter Rail corridor.

- Local Transit Service.¹

- ⇒ Enhance multi-modal linkages – shuttles, local and express buses, electric cart.
- ⇒ Explore options for provision of dial-a-ride service.
- ⇒ Implement the short and long range transit plans.

- Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).^{1,2}

- ⇒ Implement ITS improvements on Greenway and Peoria



Avenues.

- ⇒ Develop ITS strategic plan.
- ⇒ Coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions on ITS improvements.
- Transportation System Operation and Maintenance i.e. pavement management.^{1, 2}
 - ⇒ Explore and review alternative funding methods.
- Internal circulation – i.e. scalloped streets.²
 - ⇒ Complete scalloped streets within the city of Surprise as identified in the Gap Study and adjacent to Loop 303. Scalloped streets are those streets that are not completed or improved.
 - ⇒ Implement arterial capacity study.
 - ⇒ Incorporate the long range master street plan.
 - ⇒ Develop the roadway network for the area north of SR 74.
- Transportation System Capital Program – i.e. CIP, funding.²
 - ⇒ Commit to an annual CIP allocation for local transportation projects.
 - ⇒ Conduct community outreach to gauge resident interest in additional local tax with revenue dedicated to local transportation projects.
 - ⇒ Review current transportation impact fee ordinance and update as necessary.
 - ⇒ Review the current and future federal economic stimulus programs to ensure obligation of funds to projects that will benefit the City of Surprise.

Key Indicators

- Local Transit Service – Annual bus ridership numbers.
- Access – Average number of cars across existing east – west connections.
- Commuter Rail Corridor – Annual report on the progress of commuter rail planning.
- Intelligent Transportation Systems – Development of plans to engineering.



HIGHER EDUCATION

Vision Statement

Enhance partnership with all public and private K-12 education providers and higher education opportunities in Surprise that leads to the development of a 4-year university campus with college life amenities that benefit the entire city.

Why is this Important

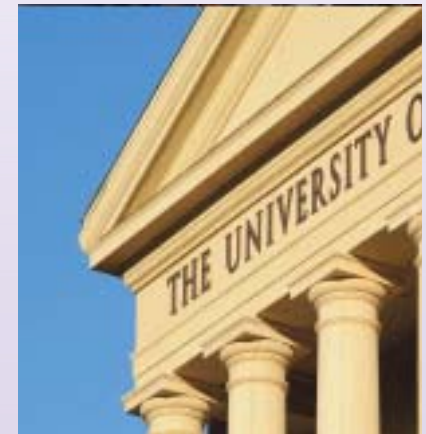
Centers of education act as anchors of talent in the global economy. They nurture and develop new firms, technologies and industries in addition to attracting, training, and retaining skilled talented people locally. It is important for Surprise to build on and strengthen local capacity and drive a culture of innovation locally.

Goals/Action Plan

- Facilitate 4-year college campus development.¹
- Direct staff to recruit university in addition to identifying land options and developing financing options.
- Incentivize school programs that focus in sports medicine, training and performance, healthcare disciplines, biosciences, sustainability and technology advancement.¹
- The city will take a strong, local, visible role in local and regional educational initiatives by expanding partnerships and maximizing resources.
- Communication, partnerships, and collaboration with all K-12 education providers.¹

Key Indicators

- 4-year college campus development – Annual progress report on acquiring a university campus.
- School programs – Number of programs available in Surprise schools within the desired categories.
- Number of joint programs held in partnership with K-12 education providers in Surprise.





TOURISM

Vision Statement

Increase economic activity in Surprise by infusing tourism dollars into the local economy by focusing on entertainment, partnerships, resorts, and the White Tank Mountains.

Why is this Important

Tourism is one of the channels for raising the profiles of the city and to prove the city's importance and vitality. With the stadium and the tennis complex, the city has experienced steady growth in tourist numbers while continuing to specialize and diversify its supply and demand. Tourism has a cross-cutting impact on the city as a whole and effects the many facets of its economic and social life.

Goals /Action Plan

- Develop a Regional Entertainment Corridor Plan.^{1,2}
- Partner with attractions located in adjacent communities.
- Discuss partnership with Maricopa County to establish White Tanks desert eco park.^{1,2}
- Identify a year-round entertainment attraction to collocate adjacent to the resort.^{1,2}
- Develop a multi-purpose entertainment amphitheater at the White Tank Mountains.
- Partner with Maricopa County, State Lands, BLM, mu-

seums and others to create an interpretive center and "Living Museum" at the White Tanks.

- Develop an annual festival framework.^{1,2}
- Work with Surprise Regional Chamber of Commerce to develop a multi-faceted/interactive visitor center.^{1,2}
- Develop a cost/benefit analysis regarding permanent stadium seating at Tennis Complex.²
- Develop cost/benefit analysis regarding a new soccer complex.²

Key Indicators

- Regional Entertainment Corridor – Annual report on the progress of the corridor until implemented.
- White Tanks Desert Eco Park – Annual report on the establishment of the desert eco-park.
- Year Round attraction – Report on activities held to establish the year round attraction near the resort.
- Annual festival framework – Regular reports on the annual festival framework and thereafter the number of attendees at each festival.
- Multi-faceted/interactive visitor center – Regular reports on the visitor center until implemented, and number of visitors, number of programs implemented by the visitor center thereafter.



SUSTAINABILITY

Vision Statement

Develop sustainability road map and carbon footprint reduction strategy.



Why is this Important

The city recognizes the importance of a position of responsibility towards developing, achieving, and maintaining a sustainable community. It ensures that all city activities take into consideration the impacts of sustainability in addition to raising community awareness and assisting the community to achieve sustainable practices.

Goals/Action Plan

- Enhance recycling program & increase residential recycling.¹
- Reduce total energy usage in city owned facilities, i.e. city hall, stadium.¹
- Enhance neighborhoods through community clean-up and community reinvestment programs.¹

- Implement code changes that protect critical wildlife corridors.¹
- Establish partnerships with local business to potentially “turn trash into treasure.”¹
- Identify the city’s carbon footprint and establish goals to reduce and maintain levels for future (sustainability plan).
- Continue implementation of city revitalization plan.

Key Indicators

- Recycling program – Percentage of total residential trash that is recycled or diverted from landfill.
- Reduce total energy usage – City hall energy usage in Kilowatts.
- Community clean up and community reinvestment programs – Number of community clean up and community investment programs in the city.
- Critical wildlife corridors – Acreage of wildlife corridors preserved in the city.
- Trash into treasure – Number of businesses that have signed into partnership with the city for the “Trash to Treasure” program.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Vision Statement

Create a robust business environment that creates employment, wealth, capital investment, and enhanced opportunities for investors and residents.

Why is this Important

Surprise needs quality jobs to ensure the long term economic viability of our city and to support the basic needs of our community. Surprise competes with neighbor communities and regions around the world for quality jobs. To significantly improve economic development, the Strategic Plan stresses priorities, and actions to reach these goals.

Goals/Action Plan

- Attract specialty medical and/or research clinics.¹
- Partner with Regional Chamber of Commerce to promote jobs.¹
- Continue hands on approach with small business startups and retention/expansion opportunities.¹
- Promote north Surprise as a manufacturing/distribution location.¹
- Free program to post job opportunities within Surprise.¹
- Assist property owners with development of Surprise Center.
- Market APS power substation in South Surprise.

- Investigate opportunities to attract theme park.
- Implement and market foreign trade zone.

Key Indicators

- Specialty/Medical clinics – Number of specialty/ medical clinics newly located in Surprise.
- Chamber of Commerce partnership – Number of events/programs organized in partnership with Chamber of Commerce to promote job growth.
- Hands on Approach with small business startups – Ratio of small businesses surviving versus small businesses failing.
- Free Job posting – Progress made towards creating the program.





THE NEXT STEPS

Annual Work Program

Each year city boards and commissions and city departments develop work programs. Action Plan goals will be incorporated into these plans and monitored for progress.

Resource Allocation

Goals incorporated into annual budgets and CIP. Specific financial needs will be discussed and presented to Council and considered on a case-by-case basis.

Strategic Plan Annual Report

Prior to each budget cycle a report will be presented to the Council with an assessment of key indicators met.